



Energy choices and risk beliefs: Is it just global warming and fear of a nuclear power plant accident?

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Abstract:

A survey of 3,200 U.S. residents focused on two issues associated with the use of nuclear and coal fuels to produce electrical energy. The first was the association between risk beliefs and preferences for coal and nuclear energy. As expected, concern about nuclear power plant accidents led to decreased support for nuclear power, and those who believed that coal causes global warming preferred less coal use. Yet other risk beliefs about the coal and nuclear energy fuel cycles were stronger or equal correlates of public preferences. The second issue is the existence of what we call acknowledged risk takers, respondents who favored increased reliance on nuclear energy, although also noting that there could be a serious nuclear plant accident, and those who favored greater coal use, despite acknowledging a link to global warming. The pro-nuclear group disproportionately was affluent educated white males, and the pro-coal group was relatively poor less educated African-American and Latino females. Yet both shared four similarities: older age, trust in management, belief that the energy facilities help the local economy, and individualistic personal values. These findings show that there is no single public with regard to energy preferences and risk beliefs. Rather, there are multiple populations with different viewpoints that surely would benefit by hearing a clear and comprehensive national energy life cycle policy from the national government.

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Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker, Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Elderly, Low Socioeconomic Status, Racial/Ethnic Subgroup

Other Racial/Ethnic Subgroup: Black; Latino

Other Vulnerable Population: Low Education

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified